

Cost Containment Suggestions
From Local WIC Providers

General Administration

Suggestion: Develop a campaign that encourages participants to choose lower cost foods, take advantage of sales and use coupons.

Response: The State Office agrees and will investigate this further.

Suggestion: Is there a way to save money on MOWINS?

Response: Missouri is part of a multi-state consortium which shares the costs of maintaining this system among all of the states. In this way we are able to limit our costs while still providing the necessary MIS and banking services.

Suggestion: Convert to EBT as soon as possible to prevent costs associated with printing and vendor error.

Response: The state WIC office is awaiting federal implementation funding in order to proceed with conversion to EBT. Once funding becomes available the implementation of EBT will take approximately 18 to 24 months.

Suggestion: Do not replace lost/stolen checks.

Response: While the State Office did review this policy as an option to consider, we must also take into account our mission of providing supplemental nutritious food to a vulnerable population.

Suggestion: Look at reducing the per participant reimbursement for LWPs over a certain caseload.

Response: The State Office is committed to protecting the funding that goes to the LWPs so they are able to continue providing WIC services to participants. Reducing reimbursement would only occur if a long term reduction in Federal funds made it unavoidable.

Suggestion: We have difficulty knowing how much money our local agency has at any given time. It is hard to budget when we continue to have changes in the amount of money we get from the state to run WIC.

Response: The State is evaluating a funding formula that provides more budgeting stability to the LWPs.

Suggestion: Offer more trainings online or via teleconference.

Response: The State Office is developing more courses via webinars. Eventually most of the education provided to LWP staff will be available online.

Suggestion: Implement 1 year certification for children.

Response: The implementation date for the 1 year certification for children will be October 1, 2013. Per federal regulations, we are still required to conduct the mid-year height/weight and hemoglobin checks. The agencies will not be required to conduct the 6 month income check.

Suggestion: Eliminate the NWA WIC Calendars

Response: The NWA WIC Calendar provides good nutrition and physical activity education to WIC participants. However, we will consider this suggestion.

Suggestion: Could the State Office create ONE food book with all items in one brochure?

Response: One food book, showing all items, will be the new look for the food list that begins October 1, 2013.

Food Issuance

Suggestion: Some participants are not using all of the baby foods and then have a lot left. I have started asking specifically if they are using all of the baby foods, if not then I decrease or delete so they don't needlessly get supplies they are unable to use.

Response: Tailoring the food package in this way is appropriate. The LWP should educate the participant on the infant's transition from baby food to table food thus decreasing the amount of baby food given to the infants.

Suggestion: Some of our participants want whole milk for their children. Allowing whole milk, with a prescription for low weight status without the Pediasure or Boost or other special formula would save money.

Response: 7CFR246.10(e)(3) states that there has to be a medical condition to allow whole milk. Whole milk cannot be issued solely for the purpose of enhancing nutrient intake or managing body weight.

Suggestion: There were many food package changes suggested, which included removing: canned beans, hot cereals, peanut butter, some of the fruit juices, some varieties of cheese.

Response: While the State Office is closely monitoring food costs, there are not immediate plans to make changes to the current food list.

Formula

Suggestion: The WIC vendors could put a mark on WIC purchased formulas so that they cannot be sold or returned. We have seen participants selling formula on social networking sites so doing some kind of labeling system might correct that.

Response: This is currently not a requirement because of the time limitations during checkout, however it is an encouraged practice. The State WIC Office is also revising the Participant Fraud Policy to include more information about social networking sites. The LWP can also tailor the food instrument if the mother indicates the entire amount of allowed formula is not needed.

Suggestion: Limit the number of special formulas available for ordering. This would reduce costs in the ordering of formula and shipping.

Response: A Formula Task Force has been formed and this cost containment idea, along with the others dealing with formula, will be discussed and recommendations will be submitted to the State WIC office for consideration.

Suggestion: Some exempt formulas such as Nutramigen should only be offered for 6 months. Most infants do not need to stay on the formula for the entire first year.

Response: The Formula Task Force will be looking at this formula and developing criteria for issuance of certain formulas.

Suggestion: All rebate-able formulas should be carried by the WIC vendors.

Response: Some vendors cannot get all formulas. The Formula Task Force will look at this issue and make recommendations.

Suggestion: Metabolic formulas could be handled by the Metabolic Formula Program.

Response: The Formula Task Force will pursue this. Many formulas are already provided by the Metabolic Formula Program.